

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABU DH 01007 301049Z

44

ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 EB-11 AID-20 XMB-07 MC-02

CIEP-03 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 CAB-09 DOTE-00 FAA-00 DRC-01 /169 W

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R 300925Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1867

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 18

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 1007

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP SY US UK TC

SUBJECT: SYRIAN CIVIL AIRCRAFT PURCHASE

REF: BEIRUT 8585

1. BRITISH AMBASSADOR MCCARTHY AND I FOUND MAHDI TAJIR AT LUNCHEON GIVEN BY SHAIKH ZAYID FOR SAUDI DELEGATION JULY 29, AND KNOWING HOW ELUSIVE HE IS, WE CORNERED HIM ABOUT SYRIAN AIRCRAFT PURCHASE. I SAID WE WERE HEARING RUMORS THAT HE WAS BACKING FRENCH AIRLINES. HE LAUGHED AND SAID FRENCH AND THEIR LOCAL SYRIAN SUPPORTERS WERE ACCUSING HIM OF PROMOTING TRISTAR. HE CLAIMED SYRIANS WOULD BE THE ONES TO MAKE DECISION. I SAID CIVIL AVIATION WAS ONE FIELD US HAD PROVEN AND RECOGNIZED SUPERIORITY, TRISTAR WAS EXCELLENT AIRCRAFT, AND IT WOULD BE DISSERVICE TO SYRIANS TO URGE THEM TO BUY ANYTHING BUT THE BEST. BRITISH AMBASSADOR SUPPORTED MY COMMENTS.

2. COMMENT: TAJIR IS ACCOMPANYING SHAIKH ZAYID TO IRAQ, EXPECTS TO VISIT DAMASCUS THEREAFTER, AND THEN WILL RETURN
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PAGE 02 ABU DH 01007 301049Z

TO LONDON. BELIEVE LOCKHEED REPS SHOULD TRY TO GET HOLD

OF HIM IN EITHER DAMASCUS OR LONDON TO WORK ON HIM SOME
MORE. I AM NOT SURE WE CAN ASSUME HE IS KEY MAN IN
DECISION JUST BECAUSE SOME SYRIANS SAY SO, BUT HE IS
CANNY INDIVIDUAL AND WORTH HAVING ON ONE'S SIDE. TAJIR
DREW ME ASIDE FROM MCCARTHY MOMENTARILY TO SAY SHAIKH
ZAYID HAD MENTIONED TO HIM MY COMMENTS TO ZAYID ABOUT US-
UAE COOPERATION ON PROJECTS IN SYRIA. TAJIR VOLUNTEERED
NO FURTHER COMMENT, HOWEVER, AND OCCASION DID NOT ENABLE
ME TO PURSUE MATTER.
STERNER

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